United Nations S/2009/393

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 July 2009

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008), adopted on 7 August 2008, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on a quarterly basis on the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the fourth submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since the last report (S/2009/284), dated 2 June 2009, with a focus on the steps taken to implement resolution 1830 (2008). It provides an update on the activities of my Special Representative for Iraq, as well as operational and security matters.

II. Activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

A. Political and constitutional activities

3. A central aspect of the UNAMI mandate is its involvement in advancing national reconciliation. When my former Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, first arrived in Iraq he made a policy choice to directly address fundamental issues central for promoting political dialogue in Iraq, including the disputed internal boundaries. After 18 months of research and outreach in the disputed areas, on 10 June UNAMI launched the High-level Task Force to advance dialogue between senior representatives of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the UNAMI reports on disputed internal boundaries. Despite the issues at stake, the complex history and the difficult legacy endured, both sides have displayed willingness to work with each other and the United Nations. The Task Force has now met on several occasions in Baghdad under United Nations auspices.

4. While this dialogue in Baghdad is encouraging, it has not been helped by events on the ground. This is especially the case in Ninawa Governorate, where several Kurdish mayors have boycotted the elected provincial government since April and where a stand-off occurred between the provincial Governor and peshmerga soldiers at a checkpoint outside Mosul in May. In addition, the leadership of the Kurdistan Regional Government has made unhelpful statements,

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especially regarding the future of Kirkuk Governorate, during the course of the recent Kurdish election campaign.

5. On 24 June, the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament adopted, by 96 votes out of 97 present, a draft regional constitution which contains assertive provisions. In particular, one clause states that the Iraqi Kurdistan region includes all the disputed areas — apparently laying claim unilaterally to districts that are located outside the recognized Kurdistan region (including in the Governorates of Ninawa, Kirkuk and Diyala) and which are the subject of talks of the High-level Task Force. This vote was followed by an effort to hold the referendum on the regional constitution on 25 July, the same day as the parliamentary and presidential elections for the Kurdistan Regional Government. For technical reasons, the Board of Commissioners of Independent High Electoral Commission, supported by the Electoral Assistance Team of UNAMI, advised that there was insufficient time to hold a referendum within such an abbreviated time frame. As a result, the referendum has been postponed, which provides the opportunity for the new Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament to make amendments to the draft constitution.

6. Despite the aforementioned areas of concern, I welcome the fact that the leadership of the Kurdistan Regional Government has compromised on the export of oil from a field in the Kurdistan region, and hope it will lead to additional steps that could permit agreement to adopt the much-needed hydrocarbon law. It is also a positive development that Iraqi Government and Kurdish forces are participating in joint security force liaison centres in numerous governorates.

7. UNAMI continued its support to the article 23 committee related to Kirkuk. After providing technical and logistical support, and sponsoring a study tour to Northern Ireland, UNAMI concluded its own reports on Kirkuk based on the work of specialized experts on property violations, power-sharing and demographics/voter registry in the governorate. These reports are being made available to the members of the Committee and the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. Despite an extension to its mandate, the Committee was unable to reach agreement and each component submitted a separate set of reports to the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. The Committee has ceased to meet and the Speaker is in the process of reconciling the various reports of the components with a view to drafting a special law on the Kirkuk election with UNAMI technical involvement that will be submitted to the Council of Representatives for consideration.

8. As part of its ongoing efforts to advance the constitutional review process through policy discussions on the federal system for Iraq, UNAMI and the Iraqi Council of Representatives conducted a high-level conference on the theme "The Future of Iraq" in Baghdad on 14 and 15 June. This legislative round table, which was a follow-up to a round table in Arbil in April, focused on hydrocarbon revenue-sharing and water resource management. Participants recognized that hydrocarbon legislation was being held up because of disagreement between Baghdad and Arbil on definitive allocations of revenue to the Kurdistan Regional Government and for the financing of national infrastructure projects. Participants underlined the need to harmonize the draft revenue-sharing legislation with related drafts governing the Iraqi National Oil Company, the production of oil and gas, and the restructuring of the Ministry of Oil. UNAMI has since presented options through the Constitutional Review Committee for a resolution of the hydrocarbon issue at the constitutional

level, either in the form of an amendment to article 115 of the Iraq Constitution (paramountcy clause) or through an intergovernmental institution.

9. There was more ground for consensus in the water-sharing discussions given the shared interest among all Iraqis in securing greater access to transboundary water flows from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, especially during this prolonged period of water shortage in Iraq. Participants agreed on the need to establish a new coordinating body for water resources in order to develop a national water strategy with both internal and regional dimensions. They requested UNAMI to present options to the Constitutional Review Committee, which it has since done.

10. The facilitation of regional cooperation remained a priority for UNAMI. In assisting with the mandate of the High-level Coordinator for the repatriation or return of missing Kuwait and third-country nationals or their remains, UNAMI and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) are prepared for the training of an exhumations team to complement the capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights, as part of efforts to advance the work of identification of remains of Kuwaiti missing persons. The Ministry of Human Rights is expected to designate an expert committee that will undertake mapping and identifying of sites before such training can commence. On the ground support has also been provided to the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Maintenance Project, established in accordance with Security Council resolution 833 (1993) and led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

B. Electoral assistance activities

11. Preparations for the Kurdistan regional parliamentary and presidential elections on 25 July and national elections scheduled for January 2010 were successfully completed by the Independent High Electoral Commission with support from UNAMI. This effort included the completion of a voter registration exercise in the Kurdistan region and the conduct of elections, as well as preparation for a nationwide voter registration exercise to commence on 15 August.

12. The voter registration update for Iraqi Kurdistan, monitored by over 5,563 Iraqi observers and political party representatives, was deemed successful and for the first time the Electoral Commission managed the entire process, including the data entry of changes and amendments to the voter list. Over 512,000 voters visited the Commission's voter registration sites, producing more than 183,000 forms requesting adjustments and data entry in Baghdad. Candidate nomination for the Kurdistan presidential and parliamentary elections followed suit. The Electoral Commission received five nominations for the office of President and 24 political entities nominated 507 candidates for the parliamentary race. The procurement of materials, logistical planning and cascade training for polling staff were also conducted without incident.

13. On 25 July, the people of the Kurdistan region turned out in large numbers to exercise their right to elect new regional representatives and the President of the region. The vote was held in an orderly environment that was notably free of violence. As at the time of the writing of this report, results had yet to be released pending the resolution of all complaints and appeals and I urge full cooperation with the Electoral Commission in this regard.

14. UNAMI continues to work with the Electoral Commission to ensure that the parliamentary election of January 2010 can be delivered on time with the acceptance and support of the Iraqi people. It is imperative for the overall credibility of the process that the reliability of the voter list is enhanced through a nationwide update exercise planned for August. Similarly, the Electoral Commission requires government funding for election activities. UNAMI is concerned that, without an election law that is adopted or amended by the Council of Representatives in a timely manner, or the release of a needed election budget and continued support for the Electoral Commission's administrative and operational tasks, the timeline and quality of future election activities may be affected.

15. In the context of maintaining the integrity of the planned series of complex electoral events, the Electoral Commission examined during the reporting period the technical feasibility of (a) a referendum on a draft Iraqi Kurdistan regional constitution concurrent with the presidential and parliamentary elections; (b) a nationwide referendum on the United States-Iraq bilateral security agreement at the same time as the Iraqi Kurdistan parliamentary and presidential elections; and (c) a separate voter registration update for the Kirkuk national elections. The three technical feasibility studies prepared by UNAMI were delivered to the Chairman of the Electoral Commission and to the Speaker of Parliament.

16. Four comprehensive lessons-learned exercises (facilitated by UNAMI jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNOPS and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems) covering various operational and technical areas have been conducted for the Electoral Commission to analyse and develop strategies for the numerous upcoming electoral activities in 2009 and early 2010. The most recent exercise, early in July, hosted by the Election Commission of India, focused on security planning and coordination, taking security lessons from the recent Iraqi governorate and Indian general elections.

C. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

17. Over recent weeks, the Government of Iraq accelerated several promising initiatives to create a sustained platform for socio-economic development, through a harmonized relationship with its international partners. In this respect, I welcome Iraq's decision to embark on a comprehensive five-year National Development Plan 2010-2014, the first step of which was launched formally in June in the presence of all United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in the United Nations country team. The Plan, developed under the leadership of the Iraqi Ministry of Planning, will give new impetus not only to the internal advancement of Iraq but also to its international normalization and progress in global development partnerships under the International Compact with Iraq.

18. Efforts to redefine the future direction of the Compact and tailor it more strategically to Iraq's emerging context moved forward. The Baghdad Coordination Group at its meeting on 26 May, co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Barham Saleh, and my Special Adviser on the Iraq Compact, Ibrahim Gambari, agreed to review progress at a ministerial conference on the Compact in Baghdad, anticipated in the latter part of 2009. Since then, the Government has undertaken to work with international partners to define specific benchmarks to be achieved. The two working groups, a governmental one led by the Minister of Finance, and a donor

group including the United Nations and the World Bank established to guide this process, met jointly on 9 July and 22 July. The efforts of UNAMI, donors and Iraqi partners on the ground in Baghdad have been followed up by consultations of my Special Adviser with the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, the Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, and the Minister of Finance, Bayan Jabr, to confirm agreement on the identification of key priorities for implementation; the reorientation of a refocused International Compact with Iraq for the remaining years; and a revisiting of the Compact's mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of its implementation and monitoring. I welcome these efforts towards a strengthened partnership that underpins the implementation of the National Development Plan in the coming years and encourage the Government to ensure that these processes continue to remain inclusive.

19. In addition, the Government, through the Ministry of Planning, has launched a commendable effort to reform and revise the country's internal aid management processes. To date, the Iraqi Strategic Review Board has been the primary mechanism for aid management in Iraq; however, it is in urgent need of updating to accommodate the broader strategic vision for development and aid partnerships now in the planning phase. The United Nations has been requested to support this process, through a donor support group led by the Ambassador of Denmark working closely with the Ministry of Planning. I warmly thank those donors who continue to provide both substantive and financial support to Iraq's development and aid harmonization efforts under the International Compact with Iraq — notably Australia, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Commission.

20. These efforts are designed to strengthen the framework for Iraq's international cooperation on development following the closure of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq to new contributions as from 30 June 2009. The Facility's Executive Committee, co-chaired by the Minister of Planning and the Government of Denmark, convened on 18 May to follow up on the Naples outcomes from February. Key decisions included (a) the conduct of a full-scale lessons-learned exercise by the United Nations, with donor and Government cooperation, with a view to applying findings to other countries and Iraq's future aid harmonization strategies; and (b) continued efforts among the Government, donors and the United Nations to together establish post-Reconstruction Fund Facility mechanisms for aid harmonization, in particular as it relates to the ongoing strategic and operational coordination of programming.

21. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2011-2014 will be the primary tool to ensure that the United Nations system can adapt effectively to the evolving needs of Iraq both structurally and substantively. As a first step towards establishing the Framework, the common country assessment was launched on 22 June in Baghdad at the largest joint Government-United Nations event to be held in Iraq since 2003. More than 100 Iraqis from ministries, parliament, civil society, the private sector and academia participated, as did all 16 specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Subsequently, the current United Nations assistance strategy for Iraq underwent a midterm review to realign it with the Government's emerging priorities. It was also decided that the United Nations country team will focus on supporting the Government's efforts by merging its own extensive situation analysis into the national planning process.

22. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and therefore future UNAMI assistance to Iraq, will be based on two key programmes, the Private Sector Development programme and the Public Sector Modernization programme, which will be increasingly critical to the socio-economic future of Iraq and its public-private sector balance, despite the recent rally in oil prices. Both are essential for allowing Iraq to balance its budget, reform its public administration for better service delivery, spur job creation to tackle the country's high youth unemployment, and create in Iraq a more favourable climate for international investment. The Private Sector Development programme is currently being implemented through seven United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Meanwhile, the Public Sector Modernization programme is due to be presented to the Iraqi Strategic Review Board.

23. The ongoing humanitarian programming of the United Nations and our partners is expected to underpin these major, upstream policy initiatives by providing immediate relief to Iraq's poor and vulnerable. The humanitarian situation in Iraq remains precarious, mainly because of insecurity and the difficulties of accessing those most in need. At the mid-year review of the 2009 consolidated appeals process for Iraq, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that the strategic priorities continue to reflect current developments in the country, especially given the enduring pockets of acute vulnerability for not just the internally displaced Iraqis, but also many deprived communities that continue to lack adequate access to basic social services and protection assistance. Civilians continue to be disproportionately affected by the ongoing violence, and the issue of protection remains a serious concern, particularly for women, children and some minority groups.

24. The total combined requirements of the 2009 consolidated appeals process for Iraq and the region now stand at $650 million, which includes over $341 million designated to assist the estimated 1.7 million Iraqis who have sought refuge in the neighbouring countries and beyond. The requirements for pillar 1 of the 2009 appeals process — which addresses the needs of vulnerable Iraqis inside the country — have increased by over a third to $308 million, with an emphasis on projects to strengthen national efforts to facilitate the return of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons and to support early recovery processes. Indeed, the pace of returns has been lower than anticipated, and the situation in many parts of the country has not yet reached a stage that would permit large-scale voluntary and sustainable returns to Iraq. Those funds for pillar 1 were critical in making possible a rapid humanitarian response to crises such as the recent mass-casualty bombing in Taza, Kirkuk, which killed up to 85 people, wounded more than 170 and left 600 homeless. United Nations agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and other actors were on the ground within hours of the attack to provide food, non-food items and medical assistance. Nevertheless, some sectors in the appeals process, including education and health, have received very limited funds against the requirements. I thank donors, including Norway, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and ECHO, who have contributed generously to date, and I wish to encourage all donors to continue to pledge their support to the consolidated appeals process.

25. UNAMI continued to collaborate closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in supporting the Iraqi authorities with the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Six community return

centres were established by UNHCR in Baghdad with plans underfoot to expand to a further 10 locations. UNHCR also assisted the rehabilitation of conflict-affected homes, and continued to expand its presence in terms of national and international staff. There are however continuing concerns over insufficient levels of material support to the displaced, returnees and other vulnerable communities, while the recent surge in violence, particularly against minorities, has led to a continuation of Iraqis leaving the country as well as some internal displacement. During a visit to Iraq in mid-July the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, L. Craig Johnstone, commended the Government of Iraq for implementing a compensation package for returnees and internally displaced families. He stressed, however, that much more needs to be done as there will not be a solution to the Iraqi situation as a whole until the plight of displaced people and Iraqi refugees has been resolved.

26. To strengthen national and local disaster risk reduction capacity and humanitarian response to both natural and man-made disasters, UNAMI, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery are working together on the development of a disaster prevention and response programme with the Government of Iraq. In consultation with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, this initiative will include recommendations on a Disaster Management Centre and National Plan. I also welcome the launch in July by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Iraq Field Coordination network of governorate-based focal points, which aims to coordinate humanitarian responses and gather information on humanitarian data more comprehensively than has been possible up to now, and I welcome its complementarity within the existing field structure headed by UNAMI Governorate Liaison Officers.

27. Tackling the effects of the drought in Iraq, which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates will lead to a 35 per cent reduction in wheat production and probably exacerbate current poverty levels, remains a priority, and the United Nations has continued efforts to mitigate the social and economic consequences. FAO conducted construction and maintenance of 120 micro-irrigation schemes and UNOPS rehabilitated the water distribution systems in Arbil Governorate, improving water quality for 30,000 inhabitants. UNICEF also facilitated a regional conference on drought, bringing together United Nations agencies and the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan region.

28. Preparations for the Iraq Population and Housing Census continued. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported Iraq in conducting a pilot census in selected governorates and established an Iraq Census High-level International Technical Advisory Board, which met early in July to discuss quality assurance issues. Discussions are ongoing as to the feasibility of conducting the census before the end of the year. In support of the Government's efforts to empower Iraqi women at home and in the workplace, UNDP hosted a workshop with the Government on strategies to counter community-based violence against women. UNICEF and UNESCO trained Education Ministry staff to prepare a full-scale analysis of the country's education sector, providing the framework for the National Education Strategy. The World Food Programme (WFP) organized a mission by Government officials to Egypt, with the aim of developing long-term solutions for food security in Iraq.

29. UNDP and UNICEF jointly launched a report on 1 July reviewing progress made in mine action since the entry into force of the Ottawa Landmine Convention in 2008. The agencies remain concerned that, despite the resumption of some mine demarcation and mine risk education activities, the ban on civilian mine clearance imposed by the Ministry of Defence remains in place, and the likelihood of achieving the Ottawa goals is limited. A high-level international mission to Iraq by the United Nations Mine Action Team in May also cited similar concerns, holding discussions with the Ministries of both Defence and the Environment. Resumption of civilian de-mining activities is essential to limit ongoing mine-related humanitarian and economic costs, and I urge the parties involved to work with the United Nations in order to facilitate discussions on ways forward.

30. Initiatives on governance, the rule of law and anti-corruption moved forward in the reporting period. In May, UNDP conducted a workshop in Istanbul for all Iraqi female judges that focused inter alia on international fair trial standards and the use of the Iraqi Legal Database. In collaboration with COSIT (Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology), UNDP and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are carrying out a comprehensive integrity survey that will end in October 2009 to establish a baseline for corruption at four ministries in four governorates, to more effectively design countermeasures for a national anti-corruption strategy. UNOPS organized a round table with civil society and government officials on the draft Iraqi law on non-governmental organizations, to agree on a series of recommendations to align the draft with international best practices. UNDP also finalized the identification and strategic planning of two model courts in Baghdad and Basrah, to add to the one in Arbil previously reported on (S/2008/284, para. 37).

D. Human rights activities

31. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to provide assistance to the Government and civil society organizations in preparation for the universal periodic review of the Iraq report under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, scheduled for February 2010. With support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNOPS, the Iraqi inter-ministerial committee on the universal periodic review attended a training on the requirements under the review and observed review sessions at the Human Rights Council in Geneva from 8 to 11 June. UNAMI is also organizing training for 25 Iraqi civil society organizations on elements of human rights monitoring and reporting as well as the universal periodic review and the role of civil society organizations under that process.

32. UNAMI continues to work together with the United Nations country team on improving the capacity of Iraqi Government and State institutions and civil society organizations in support of legislative reform in conformity with international legal norms, as well as to enhance domestic protection and monitoring capabilities where human rights violations are concerned. Initiatives and partnerships under way include activities implemented in conjunction with UNDP to provide technical advice on the curricula of the Judicial Training Institute and the reform of the penitentiary system. UNAMI is supporting a project of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to review current Iraqi anti-terrorism legislation in the context of international human rights standards, while advocating for the ratification of the

conventions on terrorism and the amendment of the current anti-terrorism law. UNAMI is further supporting UNICEF and UNFPA in the area of juvenile justice, including advocacy for legislative reform, the reduction of the length of pretrial detention, and community-level initiatives for the development of the capacities of key officials in the juvenile justice system. In addition, UNAMI is working with UNOPS and UNESCO to support media professionals, human rights defenders and academics suffering from the consequences of violence and threats inside Iraq.

33. Continuous efforts are being made by UNAMI to encourage the implementation of article 102 of the Constitution of Iraq, which provides for the establishment of a high commission for human rights that was delayed by the absence of a Parliamentary Speaker. Line ministries are now considering the appointment of members of a committee in charge of the selection process of the commissioners. In support of the Iraqi efforts, UNAMI prepared a detailed plan for the recruitment of the commissioners, which is being considered by the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Representatives. In view of the fact that the Iraqi budget for the financial year 2009-2010 omitted to provide funding for the commission, UNAMI continues to urge the Council of Representatives and the Government of Iraq to rectify that during the upcoming midterm budget review.

34. Concerns persist regarding the treatment of detainees, and protests continued during the reporting period against lengthy pretrial detentions, the abuse of detainees, and corruption in the law enforcement system. The relevant Iraqi authorities have responded to these concerns with further promises to investigate and improve the situation. During the month of June, a number of detainees' hunger strikes were recorded in many detention facilities throughout the country. In one case, a hunger strike by some 300 detainees affiliated with the Sadrist movement was reported in the Rusafa detention centre in eastern Baghdad, prompting members of the Council of Representatives Human Rights Committee and the Baghdad Operations Command to inspect the facilities. The Minister of the Interior announced on 16 June that 43 Rusafa-based policemen would be prosecuted for human rights violations, while calls to improve the detention system were made by the High Judicial Council when it convened on 16 June.

35. In an encouraging development, UNAMI attended a meeting with a representative of the Deputy Prime Minister and representatives of the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Defence and Human Rights, where the deterioration of the law enforcement system and constructive recommendations in that regard were openly discussed. There have been discussions on the issue of the transfer of detainees held by the Ministry of Defence to facilities managed by the Ministry of Justice. This is a long-standing UNAMI recommendation, and representatives of the Ministry of Defence have recently acknowledged that the detention of civilians does not fall within its jurisdiction.

36. UNAMI remains concerned by the ongoing executions by hanging of the death row inmates, as well as the lack of available information on the executions and the death penalties. There are currently at least 1,000 people on death row in Iraq, 150 of whom are reported to have exhausted all avenues of appeal. More than 100 execution orders have already been signed by the Iraqi Presidency Council. There have been 31 executions during the reporting period despite the calls by UNAMI, OHCHR and other international organizations to the Government of Iraq to institute a moratorium on the death penalty while undertaking an investigation

into all allegations of abuse of authority in detention, reviewing the criminal legislation and procedures in the light of international standards and Iraq's obligations under international law. UNAMI and OHCHR remain concerned that, at present, the Iraqi justice system does not have the capacity to guarantee fair trial procedures in accordance with, inter alia, article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iraq is a party.

E. Operational, logistic and security issues

37. UNAMI mission support continued to advance a number of projects designed to enhance the capacity of UNAMI and the United Nations country team to deliver United Nations activities in an integrated manner. In Baghdad, the construction of additional office space and the refurbishment of existing facilities is nearing completion and once finished will provide office space to allow the World Bank to co-locate with United Nations counterparts and provide additional living accommodation for the United Nations Guard Unit. UNHCR, with funding from the Government of Sweden and technical support from UNAMI, has commenced construction of additional office space at the UNAMI headquarters site that will provide UNHCR, as well as UNICEF and the World Health Organization, with improved office facilities. A second similar project was agreed between WFP and UNAMI and the construction will commence shortly.

38. UNAMI continues efforts to increase self-sufficiency in the area of air mobility, including through the acquisition of helicopters. As part of that effort, UNAMI is also expanding the support facilities at Baghdad International Airport with the construction of two helipads and the expansion of office and accommodation facilities accordingly.

39. In continuation of the implementation phase of the bilateral security agreement, the United States military redeployed from urban areas on 30 June 2009, a day marked as a national holiday, Iraqi Sovereignty Day, leaving the Iraqi security forces with overall domestic security responsibilities. Though there has not been a significant increase in insurgent activity overall, Al-Qaida and other extremist elements conducted a series of high-profile mass casualty attacks across the country during the transition period. There was a series of car bomb attacks across Baghdad, including an attack on 24 June that killed 62 civilians and injured 150 others in Sadr City and several similar attacks around Kirkuk and Mosul. Those attacks are indicative of continued efforts by the extremist elements not only to test the capability of the Iraqi security forces but to undermine public confidence in the Government to enact its sovereign role in protecting its citizens.

40. In Baghdad, the targeting of political figures continued, including the assassination, on 12 June, of Harith al-Ubaidi, the parliamentary leader of the largest Sunni political bloc. Early in July, the apparent orchestration of a series of attacks on Christian churches using explosive devices was reported in Baghdad and Mosul; that left at least four people dead and dozens wounded, including children. The attacks prompted fears of a re-emerging trend of renewed intimidation and harassment attacks aimed at terrorizing vulnerable groups and preventing the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups.

41. Incident levels remained high in northern Iraq as armed opposition groups continued attempts to exploit tensions especially within the disputed territories. Attacks resulted in mass casualty events inside Mosul and in the rural areas of Ninawa Province. Significant violent incidents included a coordinated suicide bomb attack on 8 July that killed at least 38 people and injured 66 others in Tal Afar, north-west of Mosul. Tension remains high between the Iraqi security forces and Kurdish peshmerga in areas outside of Mosul. Despite ongoing security operations in and around Kirkuk, insurgents conducted mass casualty attacks, including a car bomb incident in Taza on 20 June in which 85 people were killed near a mosque, and a car bomb attack on 30 June that killed 41 civilians and injured 120 others, sparking concerns that extremists were seeking to ignite conflict between local groups.

42. Overall, the Iraqi security forces continue to sustain security gains achieved in Al Anbar region despite the regular targeting of the forces and Awakening Council leaders in and around the Ramadi-Fallujah corridor. In Diyala insurgents followed a similar pattern of daily assaults on "Sons of Iraq" units in Baqubah and surrounding rural areas.

43. Incident levels remained relatively low across southern Iraq, as the security forces, through interdiction operations, continued to discover weapons and ammunition caches in areas of Kut, Nasiriyah and Amarah. However, these have not stopped rocket and mortar attacks on multinational force locations across the region. A multiple car bomb attack killed 35 Iraqi civilians in Al Ba'tha, west of Nasiriyah, in Dhi Qar Province.

44. Overall, the evolving nature of the security environment poses significant challenges in safeguarding United Nations personnel and assets in Iraq. Given the increasing demand on the United Nations to step up its current level of activities across the country, developing and maintaining a balanced and robust security apparatus capable of supporting and sustaining the United Nations engagement will by default require considerable resources. To achieve this balance, the UNAMI Security Section will continue to work with the specialized agencies, the funds and programmes, and with the Departments of Safety and Security and Field Support to provide necessary resources and protective measures to ensure the safety and security of staff.

45. The United Nations ability to conduct operations in this complex environment has been greatly assisted by the continued provision of military advisers and United Nations guards by Member States. Their role in liaising with Iraqi and multinational forces, particularly in the light of the ongoing security transition to Iraqi control and accompanying drawdown of the multinational forces, has been invaluable in maintaining the tempo of United Nations activities across Iraq. Furthermore, at the invitation of my Special Representative, the military advisers office will continue to support the Government of Iraq's aspiration to ultimately become a troop-contributor to future United Nations missions. I thank the Governments of Australia, Denmark, Fiji, Jordan, Nepal, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States for their contributions.

III. Observations

46. Iraq is once again entering a crucial period highlighted by its increased responsibility for the security of the country and important national elections planned for January 2010. While an increase in violence was anticipated during the redeployment of the United States military from cities on 30 June, a relative calm was achieved and the Iraq security forces have succeeded in assuming security responsibilities in critical parts of the country. I am hopeful that this is a trend that bodes well for the future of Iraq.

47. It is also encouraging that with a series of electoral events anticipated in the year ahead and extensive preparations being carried out in the lead-up to the national election, Iraqi national institutions — especially the Electoral Commission — have demonstrably developed their own expertise in implementing election activities. Most recently elections were conducted successfully in the Iraqi Kurdistan region without incident. Nevertheless, as we move closer to the parliamentary elections, the challenge will be to maintain the transparency and independence of the Electoral Commission while establishing a strong platform from which to ensure that there is acceptance of the election results. The national voter registration exercise will be a critical element in the successful implementation of the January parliamentary elections as well as possible district and sub-district elections later in 2010. I encourage the Government of Iraq to continue its support to the Electoral Commission and to ensure that funds are mobilized in a timely fashion to allow appropriate and credible preparations.

48. Now is the time for political leaders to demonstrate statesmanship, rising beyond their differences and narrow interests, and prove to the Iraqi people that sovereignty comes with responsibility and accountability in visible progress towards a return to normalcy in the daily lives of Iraqis and the functioning of a viable State. I urge the Iraqi Council of Representatives, in the spirit of national reconciliation and as a sign of political progress in the country, to proceed with the adoption of an inclusive electoral law without delay so as not to jeopardize the delivery of these constitutionally mandated elections for the entire country. Progress in adopting other vital laws, such as hydrocarbon legislation, would also be a very positive step and one that could lead to a significant increase in Iraq's oil production.

49. I am concerned about the relationship between the Federal Government in Baghdad and the leadership of the Iraqi Kurdistan region. By extension, tensions have also arisen between Kurdish security forces and non-Kurdish communities in areas outside the Kurdistan region. In past decades the Kurdish people of Iraq have endured brutal campaigns of persecution that have resulted in a determination to ensure that there must never be a repeat of such suffering. It is the special responsibility of all elected representatives, political parties and leaders to work towards reducing tensions and political differences and strive to reach political agreements, as a means of ensuring lasting peace and security in the country at large.

50. In the light of the recent adoption of the draft Kurdistan regional constitution, which lays claim to areas currently under discussion in the High-level Task Force that is meeting under United Nations auspices, I urge the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament to reconsider such provisions, which could have the potential to aggravate tensions and affect ongoing discussions

on the disputed boundaries and other issues of concern to both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq. It is my hope that the temptation to make unhelpful statements or carry out certain actions that upset the other side will diminish after the heightened political moment brought on by the recent regional election. I call for an end to provocative statements, including those which prejudge in any way the future of areas such as Kirkuk, and to any unilateral actions on the ground which the other side is likely to see as hostile in intent. The process for discussing disputed internal boundaries is in the early stages, but I expect and hope that the political will displayed by both sides will remain and that all parties will continue to work together to positively affect the situation on the ground and ensure that progress through dialogue continues. UNAMI, with the support of the international community, is ready to continue its efforts to further dialogue and to help the parties reach possible agreement on the various issues at stake, at the request of the Government of Iraq.

51. The Government of Iraq continues to address issues of protection of human rights and the rule of law, despite challenges to its capacity. The scheduled examination by the universal periodic review mechanism in February 2010 presents a prime opportunity to demonstrate considerable strides in setting up a robust legal framework should the Independent National Commission for Human Rights be up and running by that time. In the meantime, I continue to urge the Government of Iraq to consider formally establishing a moratorium on the death penalty, pending a thorough review of the Iraqi legislation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/149. UNAMI looks forward to continuing its work in promoting the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform in Iraq.

52. Iraq is at an important juncture in its recovery and development, and it is also potentially a time of opportunity. There is momentum across the spectrum of government to tackle some of the country's most entrenched socio-economic issues: unemployment, dilapidated infrastructure, corruption, poverty and disproportionate governance costs. As Iraq moves ahead on its most ambitious programme of reforms since 2003, I urge its leaders to ensure that the needs of all its citizens, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, are made central to development planning. Senior Iraqi officials have stressed the need for greater international investment in Iraq and mobilization of untapped Iraqi economic and natural resources to increase the country's revenues.

53. Economic revival in Iraq must also be strategically geared towards addressing inequalities through greater investment in social services, social protections and the realization of fundamental human rights for every Iraqi man, woman and child. These aspects of Iraq's development will have to be addressed within the National Development Plan, which should guide our reflection on the revised benchmarks for the International Compact with Iraq. The high-level conference on the Compact to be held in Baghdad in the latter part of 2009 will be an important occasion for determining the future of Iraq's partnership with the international community and indicating the country's priorities for the coming year. A common vision must be developed between Iraq and the international community before that conference to ensure a productive event.

54. Over the longer term, the Government's National Development Plan, supported by the adoption of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, will also align United Nations and Iraqi Government activities and accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in all parts of the country. It will be accompanied by higher expectations that the United Nations will be present across Iraq and coordinate the delivery of assistance in an integrated framework to "deliver as one" United Nations. Iraqi progress on the National Development Plan and the Compact depends, as in many other areas, on building partnerships within government to ensure a common approach. In this regard, I welcome the inclusion of a range of government actors, including the Ministry of Planning, in the process to refine the benchmarks of the Compact. By avoiding parallel processes and ensuring the inclusion of all Iraqi stakeholders, the development and modernization agenda for Iraq has the potential to become a strong platform for unity across different government agencies and within parliament itself and I urge the leaders of Iraq to increase efforts in this direction.

55. The challenge of dwindling natural water resources, particularly in the face of the prolonged drought, is a source of deep concern to the United Nations system in Iraq. However, it has demonstrated the ability of Iraqi politicians to work together in the national interest on behalf of those affected. This sense of shared responsibility was revealed during a recent constitutional conference on natural resources which led to the proposal for the establishment of a national council for water resources to develop a national water strategy. There is also a growing and shared concern in Iraq regarding the need to secure greater access to transboundary water flows from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, and Iraqi policymakers have stressed the need for United Nations involvement in regional dialogue on the management of these flows. I commend these initiatives and encourage Iraq and its neighbours to pursue further dialogue that seeks a longer-term solution for the country's shared waterways, and hope the spirit in which it was undertaken will be transferred to other issues to aid the national reconciliation process and regional dialogue.

56. Improvements in security inside Iraq have contributed to increased returns of refugees and internally displaced people in Iraq. The provision of land and the availability of more funds for shelter and other basic needs are essential to prepare the ground for the return of Iraqi refugees and the internally displaced. While there continue to be pockets of insecurity in the country and uncertainty among some refugee populations, increased engagement by the Government of Iraq with Iraqi refugees outside Iraq, including through national reconciliation efforts, could help to pave the way for eventual voluntary return.

57. My former Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, completed his 18-month tenure on 30 June. On 9 July I appointed Ad Melkert of the Netherlands as my new Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI. He immediately travelled to the Mission for a first round of consultations. Mr. Melkert brings a valuable combination of extensive political experience and economic and development expertise, which will be very well suited to this period of transition in Iraq. Finally, I would like to thank the UNAMI national and international staff, as well as the personnel of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, for their tireless efforts under very challenging conditions.

58. On the occasion of the review of the Mission's mandate, this report has taken stock of current UNAMI activities related to advising, supporting and assisting the Government and people of Iraq in advancing political dialogue and national reconciliation, the holding of elections and referendums, the constitutional review, the resolution of disputed internal boundaries, and regional dialogue. In line with the current mandate, UNAMI also continues to facilitate the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, the return of displaced persons where appropriate, the implementation of the International Compact with Iraq, programmes related to the delivery of essential services or economic reform and development, as well as the protection of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law in Iraq. It is my firm belief that the United Nations, at the request of and in consultation with the Government of Iraq, can continue to play a strong and important role in the continued effort towards stability and progress in Iraq.